

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
PRESENTATION, INTERVIEWS, SPECIAL SESSION AND WORKSESSION
OF THE CITY COUNCIL
(Adopted September 26, 2005)**

September 6, 2005

OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Mayor Porter	City Manager Matthews
Councilmember Austin-Lane	Community and Government Liaison Ludlow
Councilmember Barry	City Clerk Carpenter
Councilmember Elrich	HCD Director Daines
Councilmember Ritzo	Recreation Director Haiduven
Councilmember Seamens	Affordable Housing Manager Walker
Councilmember Williams	Public Works Director Lott

The meeting was called to order at 7:39 p.m. in the Municipal Building Council Chambers, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Williams announced that Councilmember Elrich will be late because he is attending two community association meetings.

Mr. Williams noted that September is Emergency Preparedness Month. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and the National Capital Regional Emergency Preparedness Council are working on emergency preparedness planning for the region. Information is available on-line and in hard copy. In addition, COG is coordinating the regional effort to assist those affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Mr. Williams said that developers at East Hampshire Center are looking to start the process over to build a self storage facility. In addition, DC is rebuilding Eastern Avenue between North Capital Street and Laurel Avenue.

Mr. Seamens announced efforts by local organizations to assist victims of Hurricane Katrina. He said the City has moved slowly in appointing members to the Emergency Preparedness Committee.

Ms. Austin-Lane noted local Red Cross efforts to help with the aftermath of the hurricane. She said Council should be calling for a very clear analysis of what went wrong at the federal level.

Ms. Austin-Lane announced a September 7 meeting at Victory Tower where the new owners of

the Taliano's and Rerun buildings will discuss their ideas for redevelopment. She indicated that the developers have assured the community that they will take into account their concerns.

Ms. Austin-Lane noted the opening of a new store in a storefront under the railroad tracks. The store sells fair trade furniture and home furnishings. She announced a Takoma Together picnic to be held next weekend and noted that the Folk Festival will be held next weekend.

Mr. Barry announced the first of two town meetings on gang activity. The first is to be held September 14. It will focus on law enforcement efforts. A second meeting will be held a month later to explore the underlying causes and explore interventions.

Ms. Austin-Lane provided an update on the efforts to influence the proposed development at the Takoma Metro.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Pat Loveless, 7620 Maple Avenue, asked the Council to petition the State to open up any empty buildings to use as housing and training centers for victims of Hurricane Katrina. He also spoke about the need to educate and protect children from predators.

Andy Kelemen, Chair of the PSCAC, commented that the Emergency Preparedness Committee has held its first meeting. He noted that it has become apparent that federal guidelines for individuals have changed in an emergency, now expecting individuals to take care of themselves for 96 hours after an emergency.

Bea Welthredge, 910 Heather Avenue, spoke about the need to respond to the Hurricane Katrina aftermath by paring action to assist with a political response. She suggested a resolution by Council and community meetings.

Leland Ellis, 903 Heather Avenue, said he is familiar with planning at the federal level. Coordination is difficult. He said it is important that the community have a plan which is exercised and understood. The community does need to get engaged. Mr. Ellis encouraged Council and the community to think about what Takoma Park can do as a community.

Alain Thery, Erie Avenue, commented on the proposed October 22nd grand opening ceremony for the Community Center and questioned whether the building will be available for use by the public at that time.

The agenda was reordered.

6. Resolution Expressing Appreciation to Public Works Director Alfred Lott

Motion by Austin-Lane; second by Williams.

Ms. Porter thanked Mr. Lott for his great work, particularly his efforts to get the streets rehabilitated.

Mr. Williams noted the work on street rehabilitation. He also commended Mr. Lott for working with the neighborhoods, particularly WACO.

Mr. Seamens congratulated Mr. Lott on his new position, as City Manager of Albany, Georgia. He noted his appreciation of Mr. Lott's approach to hiring employees.

Ms. Austin-Lane said she is sorry to lose Mr. Lott. She said he has served important role in the City as we transitioned from team leadership to director. She expressed appreciation for Mr. Lott's dedication.

Mr. Barry commented that anyone who has worked with Mr. Lott knows he is a real leader. He thanked Mr. Lott for his good work and for being someone who encourages high goals.

Resolution 2005-65 was adopted (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Ritzo, Seamens, Williams; ABSENT: Elrich).

Resolution 2005-65 (Attached)

Mr. Lott said he was honored by the resolution and the kind comments. He said he enjoyed an excellent relationship with the City Council. He commented on the expectations of residents and the challenge to live up to the expectations. He thanked his employees and the current and former City Manager.

PRESENTATION

1. Update on the Community Center Construction Project

Ms. Matthews provided a detailed financial report on the project and status of the proposed change orders. (Report attached.)

Council questioned Ms. Matthews about the anticipated outcome of the PCO's, landscaping, moving expenses for City staff, timing of the end of current construction and start of the new phase of the project, and the status of the proposed sidewalk through the parking lot.

INTERVIEWS

2. Arts and Humanities Commission

Council interviewed Lucinda Stickney Duggen.

3. Committee on the Environment

Council interviewed Albert Nunez.

4. Safe Roadways Committee

Council interviewed Jay Lee and Andy Kelemen.

5. Tree Commission

Council interviewed Melanie Fosnaught and Nicolien van Schouwen.

7. Resolution re: Montgomery County Purchase of Hampshire Towers

Ms. Daines reported that tenants of Hampshire Towers were notified of the pending sale of the property. A tenants association was formed representing over one-third of the residents. The tenants association has submitted a letter of interest in purchasing the property. They have until September 20 to purchase. They can transfer their rights to purchase to another party. The association has met with Montgomery County and noted their willingness to work with the County. The resolution before the Council is required if the County is to preserve its right to purchase. This is not meant to reduce the tenants rights. They are in agreement with the resolution. (Presentation attached.)

Joseph Giloley, Division Chief of Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Code Enforcement, talked about negotiations to purchase the building. He described the extensive repairs needed in the building.

Marvin Binion, President of the Tenant Association, endorsed the resolution.

Gerald H. Joseph, of the Community Preservation and Development Corporation, a nonprofit development corporation, said he works closely with Mr. Giloley and Montgomery County. He spoke about plans for the building with the goal of maintaining affordable housing.

Mr. Elrich spoke about the wave of condo conversion in Montgomery County and the lack of affordable housing. He said he hopes the County has the resources to be aggressive. Mr. Elrich spoke about his efforts in asking the legislature to change the laws to enable local legislation to protect tenants in these situations.

Mr. Williams commented about the experience with 22-24 Manor Circle, which was a successful end state of this kind of process, where the tenants partnered with a developer.

Mr. Barry noted that the residents are excited about this. 1500 - 2000 people live in the buildings. He spoke about problems with crime in the area and the importance of home ownership to give people a sense of place. Mr. Barry proposed another whereas clause to indicate that the purchase by the County or the tenant association would be an important step in revitalizing the New Hampshire Avenue corridor between University Boulevard and the District line.

Motion by Barry; second by Elrich.

Ms. Porter commented about the escalation of real estate prices and the importance of preserving affordable housing.

Mr. Seamens supported the resolution, noting that it is important because of Council's past emphasis on affordable housing. He asked that Ms. Daines' comments be submitted for the permanent record.

Margaret Veriamo, Hampshire Towers tenant, she spoke about her concerns with the potential displacement of tenants if the tenants or the County do not purchase the property. She supported the resolution.

Patricia Powell, 641 Houston Avenue, commented that her building is being converted to condominiums. She thanked Council for their support of tenants and spoke of her concerns for displaced tenants.

Keither Berner, Flower Avenue, spoke about the need to maintain the diversity in the community. He encouraged Council to reach out to the County and State to address the issue of loss of affordable housing.

Mr. Loveless, 7620 Maple Avenue, supported the resolution. He said he believes that affordable housing is a basic human right.

Resolution 2005-66 was adopted (VOTING FOR: Porter; Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Ritzo, Seamens, Williams).

**Resolution 2005-66
(Attached)**

BREAK

The Council recessed for a scheduled break at 10:07 p.m. and reconvened at 10:24 p.m.

8. First Reading Ordinance re: FY05 Budget Amendment No. 3

Ms. Matthews explained the need for the budget amendment as a housekeeping measure.

In response to a question from Mr. Williams, Ms. Matthews referenced the legal level of control of the budget, which is at the fund level. She said if a fund is in balance, not amendment is required. If the fund exceeds the approved expenditures, then a budget amendment is recommended. The general fund is within the budget. The amendment affects the Storm Water and the Community Center funds.

Mr. Seamens said he feels uncomfortable in the lapse of time past the budget year that we are doing this. He said he continues continue to feel uncomfortable with the level of control at the fund level. He requested the subject be put on a future agenda for discussion.

Motion by Williams, to convene as the Stormwater Management Board; second by Seamens.

The Council voted unanimously to convene as the Stormwater Management Board.

Motion by Elrich; second by Williams, to accept the ordinance at first reading.

Alain Thery, 716 Erie Avenue, questioned the timing of the budget amendment.

After additional comments by Council, the City Manager was directed to provide additional information at second reading of the ordinance.

Ordinance 2005-25 was accepted at first reading (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Ritzo, Seamens, Williams).

Ordinance 2005-25 (Attached)

9. First Reading Ordinance re: Renovation of Community Plaza Level

Ms. Matthews explained that the bids for the renovation of the existing first floor administrative offices were opened on June 8. They are good for 90 days. There were three bids, one of which was deemed nonresponsive. Ms. Matthews reviewed the bid alternates. She said the contract would include the bid alternates, excluding the kitchen, plus additional drainage work. She asked for Council direction on including the rough in for the kitchen.

Council questioned Ms. Matthews about how much funding is available for the work.

Mr. Seamens said he does not have a comfort level about the funding.

Mr. Barry said we want to make decisions that facilitate the maximum use of the building. He

said he would support rough in of the kitchen if the kitchen will draw people and will generate revenue.

Mr. Elrich agreed.

Mr. Williams agreed on roughing in the kitchen. He said the elevator remains a concern for him.

Ms. Porter commented that adding the kitchen later without doing the rough in work now would cost more. The elevator will cost the same.

Mr. Elrich said he remains unhappy with the cost of the security system.

There was general agreement to add the kitchen rough in work at second reading of the ordinance.

Motion by Austin-Lane; second by Williams.

Ms. Austin-Lane commented that the elevator is a priority.

Ordinance 2005-26 was accepted at first reading (VOTING FOR: Porter, Austin-Lane, Barry, Elrich, Ritzo, Seamens, Williams).

**Ordinance 2005-26
(Attached)**

Mr. Elrich asked about the soil study and utility location he had proposed to explore the proposed location for building a gym. He requested that the proposal be scheduled for Council approval.

10. Proposed Advisory Referendum on Instant Runoff Voting

Ms. Austin-Lane suggested that a public hearing date be advertised in the October City Newsletter.

Ms. Ritzo said she does not see why Council is considering doing this now, as an advisory referendum in the upcoming election.

Ms. Austin-Lane said she believed it would be more broadly decided if it is on the ballot.

Council scheduled a resolution and public comments for the October 6 Council meeting.

11. Legislative Priorities

Ms. Ludlow solicited Council input on legislative priorities. Council agreed to go forward with the proposed priorities as described in Ms. Ludlow's agenda cover sheet. In addition, they directed staff to request State legislation on condominium conversion to be proposed as a local bill and to request legislative direction to encourage construction of more affordable housing. There was Council consensus to schedule a resolution concerning proposed Federal telecom and cable legislation.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council adjourned for the evening at 12:01 a.m.